A 1221

OF THE MERIT OF *GOOD WORKS.*

[ALLIX, Peter]

Imprimatur

Liber cui Titulus, [A Diſcourſe concerning the Merit of Good Works.] *Guil. Needham RR. in Chriſto P. ac D.D. Wilhelmo Archiep. Cantuar. à Sacr. Domeſt.*

Apr. 1. 1688.

A DISCOURSE Concerning the MERIT OF Good Works.

LONDON,
Printed for Richard Chiſwell, at the *Roſe* and *Crown* in S. *Paul*'s Church-Yard. MDCLXXXVIII.

A DISCOURSE

Concerning the Merit of Good Works.

THE Doctrine of the *Merit of Good Works* is juſtly look't upon by Proteſtants as one of the Opinions of the preſent Church of *Rome*.

Firſt, The *Council of Trent* (a) does anathematize thoſe, who deny that a Man juſtified by Good Works does truly merit Eternal Life. *Vega*, who wrote his Books of Juſtification, during the time that he was at the Council, does maintain, (b) That the Council, by *truely meriting*, did underſtand *meriting de condigno*. Now the difference betwixt Merit *de congruo* and *Merit de condigno* uſed in the *Roman* Church, is this; Merit *de congruo* ſignifies a Good Work, which is worthy of Divine Reward, not out of any obligation from Juſtice, but out of a principle of fitneſs (or *congruity*), and from the free Bounty of God. Merit *ex condigno* is a Good Work to which Reward is due from a principle of Juſtice as well becauſe of the Worth or Dignity of the Work, as becauſe of the worth of the perſon that has done it.

(a) *Seſſ.* 6. *Can.* 32.

(b) *Op. de Juſtific. q.* 5.

Secondly, It is the opinion of the Divines of the Church of *Rome*, as *Bellarmine* has determin'd (*c*), *Gregory de Valentia* maintains it also for a certain (*d*) point of Faith.

(*c*) *De Justif. l.* 5. *c.* 17.
(*d*) *Tom.* 2. *Disp.* 8. *q.* 6. *punct.* 1. §. 1.

Thirdly, The Inquisition did most evidently declare it, when it did expunge for heretical, out of several Books of that Church, such Propositions, as did deny the Merit of Good-Works. The same thing also was done by Cardinal *Quiroga*, in his *Index Expurgatorius*, which he composed according to the order of the Council of *Trent*.

Fourthly, The same Spirit did appear in the Divines of the Church of *Rome*, when they advised those of their Communion to take heed of the opinion of such ancient Authors as do oppose the Merit of Good Works. Which was done at *Rome*, in *Spain*, in *France*, with respect to such Authors as they could not any longer suppress. Which matter of Fact is so evident, that nothing but the height of impudence can be able to gainsay or deny it.

If it comes once to be fully acknowledg'd, that the Church of *Rome* is of this opinion, we may justly charge it with one of the proudest Errours, that it could ever possibly be guilty of; and with having renounc'd that grand principle of Christianity, which does look upon that reward which God does vouchsafe to Good Works, as the effect not of Commutative Justice, which gives so much for so much, but as the effect of the faithfulness of God to such as should obey his Commandments, though their obedience has nothing in it self able to merit such a reward. For so saith S. *Paul* *, *The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compar'd with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

* Rom. 8. 18.

Moreover,

Moreover, we are very ſure, that if the Church of *Rome*, in this Article of her belief, be quite of another opinion than S. *Paul* and the whole ſtream of Antiquity was of, for the eleven firſt ages of the Church, which has ſufficiently been prov'd; ſo neither does it agree with the moſt eminent Doctors of the Latine Church, which have been ſince the eleventh age. To prove this, is the deſign of this Diſcourſe, that there may be no refuge left for this errour in this matter.

I begin with that exhortation which *Anſelme* Archbiſhop of *Canterbury* (*f*) requir'd ſhould be given to a certain Monk when he was a dying, after this manner: *Do you believe that you cannot be ſav'd, but by the death of Jeſus Chriſt?* A. *I do believe ſo. Do you heartily thank him for it?* A. *I do. Be you therefore ever thanking him for it as long as you live, and put your whole truſt and confidence in that death alone; and let that be your only ſafeguard. And if the Lord will enter into judgment with thee, ſay thus, O Lord, unleſs I hold the death of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt between me and thee and thy judgment, I am not able to plead with thee. If he tells you, that you have merited damnation, ſay unto him, I hold the Death of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt between me and my ill deſerts; and inſtead of thoſe Merits which I ought to have, but alas! have not, I offer to thee the Merit of his moſt meritorious paſſion. Let him ſay moreover, I hold the death of Jeſus Chriſt between me and thine anger; after which let him add, Into thy hands &c.* and he ſhall die with aſſurance, and he ſhall never ſee death.

(*f*) *Oper. p.* 291.

After this manner did *Anſelme*, who died in the Year 1109. require that a Monk, that is, ſuch a one, as according to their opinion, has Merits enough, both for himſelf and others, ſhould make his Confeſſion upon his Death-bed. Concerning which action of his,

his, one may obſerve, *Firſt*, That this *Anſelme* was Canonized, and his name is to be found upon the 21ſt. of *April* in the *Roman Martyrology*, which ſhows that he was no Teacher of Hereſie [as they call Hereſie]. *Secondly*, That this Exhortation which he required ſhould be given to perſons that were dying, was look't upon as ſo excellent a one all *Europe* over, that there is ſcarce any Book, belonging to the Church-Affairs, wherein it is not to be found. *Thirdly*, That the Church of *Rome* it ſelf did own it, as Cardinal *Hoſius* does witneſs (g). *Fourthly* That it was never charg'd with containing any pernicious Doctrine till the Popes, and the Inquiſitors of the Faith, and the Council of *Trent*, cauſed thoſe Articles, which we juſt now took notice of, to be blotted out, as contrary to the belief of their Church. *Fifthly* That notwithſtanding this condemnation of it by the *Index Expurgatorius*, it is ſtill retain'd in *France*, and may be ſeen in that edition of the Book Intituled *Ordo Baptizandi*, which was publiſh'd in the year 1614, where the ſame Queſtions and Anſwers are now to be ſeen, which were formerly condemn'd by Cardinal *Quiroga*.

(g) *Confeſſ. Fidei Petric. cap.* 73.

One had need to tranſcribe the greateſt part of St. *Bernard*'s Works, to produce all thoſe places, wherein that Father has ſhown himſelf to be of the ſame opinion with St. *Anſelme*. Thus he ſpeaks in his ſixty firſt Sermon upon the *Canticles*. *In the mercy of the Lord is my Merit; I am rich in Merits, ſeeing he is rich in compaſſion. As the mercies of the Lord are numberleſs, ſo are my Merits. If my Conſcience does accuſe me of a great many ſins, where ſins do abound, there does grace much more abound..... ſhall I ſing of my own righteouſneſſes? O Lord, I will make mention of thy righteouſneſs only, which is mine alſo becauſe thou haſt made it ſo.*

He

He ſpeaks ſtill more particularly at the end of his Book of *Grace and of Free-Will. How*, ſays he, *does the Apoſtle call that Crown, which he ſays is laid up for him*, a Crown of righteouſneſs? *Is it not becauſe one may juſtly claim, as a due debt, whatſoever is never ſo freely promiſed? He ſays, in effect, I know whom* I have believed; and I am perſwaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him. *And becauſe he believed him, who had promiſed him, he does with confidence demand that which had been promiſed. The promiſe is of mercy, but it ought to be performed in juſtice. The Crown then which St.* Paul *does wait for, is* a Crown of righteouſneſs, *not of his own righteouſneſs, but of God's. For it is but juſt, that he ſhould pay what he owes, and he owes whatſoever he has promiſed. So then, 'tis the juſtice of God only on which the Apoſtle does rely..... If any one therefore would give our Merits their due name, they are certain ſeeds of hope, motives to charity, marks of a ſecret predeſtination, preſages of future happineſs, the way to a Kingdom, but by no means the cauſe which does entitle us to it.* It is impoſſible to blaſt this proud Doctrine of Merits of condignity more effectually than St. *Bernard* does in theſe words: The ſame ſenſe is repeated in ſome others of his Works; as in his firſt Sermon of the *Annunciation*, and in the fifteenth Sermon on *Quis habitat*, and eſpecially in his hundred and ninetieth Epiſtle againſt the Hereſies of *Petrus Abelardus*, who was one of the firſt, after the *Pelagians*, who did oppoſe this Doctrine of the Goſpel.

We may obſerve in the mean time, *Firſt*, That St. *Bernard* was Canonized by *Alexander* the III. in the Year 1165, *viz.* Twelve Years after his Death;

Secondly, That Pope *Innocent* the II. does approve of this Epiſtle of St. *Bernard*'s againſt *Abælardus*, as may be ſeen by that Epiſtle which he wrote to the Archbiſhops of *Sens* and of *Rheims*, to their Suffragans, and to St. *Bernard* himſelf, and which is the one hundred ninety fourth amongſt St. *Bernard*'s Epiſtles. *Thirdly*, That he was the moſt learned Man in his time. *Fourthly*, That he was the Founder of an eminent Order, which is diſperſed throughout all the Weſtern part of the World, and that a great number of Abbots, Biſhops and Cardinals have come out of his School.

Petrus Abbot of St. *Rhemy*——at *Rheims*, and afterwards Biſhop of *Chartres*, wrote theſe words, a little before the Year 1170 (*h*). *That the conſcience of him who does make confeſſion of his greateſt ſins does ſtand in need of a handful of the blood of Jeſus Chriſt: inſtead of dipping the tip of his finger in water; let him waſh his hands, not in the blood of a ſinner, but in the death of his Redeemer. Let him dip his finger in the place where the Nails were.* He does afterward compare the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt upon the Croſs to that of the Lamb which was ſprinkled by the Prieſt; and from thence takes occaſion to expreſs himſelf thus: *Dip then thy finger, and ſprinkle it againſt the Veil of the Sanctuary, to the end that the blood of our Lord's paſſion may ſerve thee for a key to open the gates of heaven.*

(*h*) *Tract. de Panibus, cap.* 15.

The ſame Author ſays alſo in another Work of his (*i*), *We muſt every day preſent before God, not our own Merit, which is evil, but the priviledge of his nature, and his mercy.* This is the conſtant Doctrine of the XII*th* Age.

(*i*) *Lib.* 1. *de Tabern. Moſaici Expoſit. p.* 929. B. P.

Urban

Urban the IV*th* lived about the middle of the XIII*th* Age. He is famous for inſtituting the *Feaſt of the Sacrament*, upon the account of a pretended Revelation to a certain religious Woman of the Country of *Liege*. There is a Commentary of his upon the *Miſerere*, where he ſhows, that he does follow the ſame Doctrine concerning the *Merit of Good Works*, which was univerſally received before his time. *Firſt*, He proteſts that he does appeal from Juſtice to Mercy, according to the Exhortation of St. *Anſelme*. *Secondly*, He does confeſs that there is nothing in him able to merit that Glory which he does wait for (*k*). *Thirdly*, He declares that Mercy has no reſpect to our Merits, but only to our Miſery. *Fourthly*, He does make uſe of ſuch terms as theſe: *I do not beg for my own Merits ſake, or for thy Juſtice or my own .... or for my Works ſake, wherein I have miſerably gone aſtray, but for thy great mercy.* Non peto ſecundum meritum meum, vel ſecundum juſtitiam tuam vel meam .... vel ſecundum opera mea, quibus miſer deviavi, ſed ſecundum magnam miſericordiam tuam.

(*k*) *Quia igitur ſolvendo non ſum, paſſionis condignæ ad futuram gloriam quam expetto.*

Thomas Aquinas who was contemporary with this Pope ſpeaks thus (*m*); *No Man can make any pretence of Merit before God, unleſs by ſuppoſing a Divine diſpoſition, by virtue of which Man does obtain of God by his operation*, quaſi mercedem, *in manner of a Salary as it were, that for which God has given him the power of working.* This is the Doctrine of the Goſpel. But ſee here the leaven which *Thomas* adds to it, and which has ſo very much ſowred the whole maſs of the Divinity of the Church of *Rome*. The ſame *Thomas* in the Third Article of the ſame Queſtion, with ſome other Divines in his time, does maintain, That

(*m*) 1, 2. *Q.* 114. *A.* 1.

becauſe of the operation and the grace of the Holy Spirit wrought in the faithful, and from whence Good Works do proceed, their Good Works do merit *de condigno*, which is ſo very weak a foundation, that one might naturally draw from it a Doctrine quite contrary to that which *Thomas Aquinas* has gathered from it. Upon which account alone *Vaſquez* thought himſelf obliged to refute it. The ſame Leaven is to be found alſo in St. *Bonaventure*, in *Gulielmus Antiſſiodorenſis*, and in *Guilielmus Pariſienſis*. But all this could not hinder but that the Holy Doctrine ſhould ſtill be preſerved in the Chairs and Schools of the *Latine* Church.

Ægidius de Roma is very famous both for his Birth and Dignities, but eſpecially for having undertaken the Defence of St. *Thomas*. The ſumm of which has been critically examined by an eminent Divine of *Oxford*, in a Book entituled, *Thoma Reprehenſorium* (*x*). In the mean time he has made no difficulty of deſerting St. *Thomas* in the matter of Merit. He does expreſsly ſay (*o*), *Firſt*, That there muſt be ſome equality between the Merit and its Reward, and that it is this equality, which is the foundation of Juſtice; then he concludes, that where there is not ſuch an Equality, there can be no Juſtice. *Secondly*, He maintains that the faithful are conſidered in reſpect of God, as Servants are in reſpect of their Maſters, Children of their Parents, and the Wife of her Husband. He could not have ſpoken more expreſly of Juſtice or of Merit. *Thirdly*, He ſhows how that our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt declared this Truth, *Luke* 17. 10. where he ſays, *When ye ſhall have done all thoſe things that are commanded you, ſay we are unprofitable ſervants, we have done that which*

(*x*) *Act. Mirac.* c. 409.

(*o*) *In* 2. *Diſt.* 27. *Q.* 1. *Art.* 3.

which was our duty to do. (p) For a ſervant cannot do more than he ought, for whatſoever he does, is but his duty. *There is not therefore any thing ſimply juſt, nor ſimply a Merit between a Maſter and a Servant, but there may be ſomething like it.* This is the opinion of him whom they commonly call the Prince of Divines.

(p) *Servus autem nihil poteſt ſupererogare, ſed totum eſt debitum quicquid facit. Non eſt ergo ſimpliciter juſtum nec ſimpliciter meritum inter Dominum & Servum, ſed poteſt eſſe aliquid ſimile huic.*

Raymondus de Rochefort Penitentiary of *Gregory* the ninth, and the third General of the Order of the *Jacobins* compos'd at the ſame time a Summary of the caſes of Repentance, an Abridgment of which may be found in that place, where the Author does ſet down the confeſſion of dying perſons, in the ſame terms that St. *Anſelme* had preſcrib'd to them. There is no need of repeating them, I ſuppoſe it was made a little after *Raymondus*'s Work was publiſh'd, becauſe there are ſo many ancient Manuſcripts of it to be found in Libraries.

Durandus Biſhop of *Puy*, and afterwards Biſhop of *Meaux*, does ſolemnly confute the Doctrine of St. *Thomas Aquinas*, about the Merit of Good Works (q). And he does it ſo notably both by Scripture and Reaſon, that the Divines of the Church of *Rome* are forc'd to look upon him as an Antagoniſt of their *Thomas Aquinas*. Yet for all that, this *Durandus* taught Divinity at *Rome*, and at *Paris* they had generally a great reverence and eſteem for him.

(q) *n.* 2. *Diſt.* 27. *q.* 2.

Moreover it is plain, that this was not his opinion in particular, but was the general belief of moſt people: firſt that very year in which *Durandus* died, viz. in the year 1333. *Guilielmus de Montrotier* publiſh'd a Treatiſe of his for a Direction for Curates, in

in which theſe words do occur upon the Lord's Prayer (r): *But why do we rather ſay thy Kingdom come, than ſay, Let us come into thy Kingdom? I anſwer, that it is to ſhow us, that no man does obtain the glory of Paradiſe by his own Merits, but purely by the grace of God, according to that of the Apoſtle,* not by Works of Righteouſneſs, which we have done, but according to his mercy he ſaved us. *It is therefore we ſay* adveniat, *that is to ſay, Let thy grace come unto us,* and not, *Let us arive at that; becauſe, as was ſaid, we cannot arrive at it by our own Merits.*

(r) *Ch. 2. du traitté 3 part 2.*

Secondly, *Nicholas de Lyra* has made notes upon the whole Bible, and has preſerv'd that little knowledg of the Holy Scriptures which did remain before the Reformation. He wrote theſe words at the ſame time, upon the tenth Chapter of St. *John. The glory of Heaven cannot properly be called wages, but a kind of free gift, in as much as that only which is paid as a recompence for ſome labour, is called wages. And the reaſon of this is, becauſe that an Inheritance is diſtinguiſh'd from wages properly ſo called; juſt as a Son, to whom the Inheritance does belong, ought to be diſtinguiſh'd from a hireling, to whom wages is due. Thus the glory of Heaven is given to the faithful, as an inheritance is to Children, and has not therefore the nature of wages.*

Thirdly, *Simon de Caſſia* who died in the year 1348. ſpeaks after the ſame manner (ſ) upon thoſe words, *Call the labourers, and give them hire, Jeſus Chriſt,* ſaith he, *has made uſe of a ſoft word, when he ſaid not,* their hire, *becauſe no man does merit rewards for his Good Works, nor indeed the greateſt wages. Upon which account it is, that he does not add* their, *but* hire *only, viz. that which he has from all eternity prepar'd to beſtow upon thoſe that Work righteouſneſs.*

(ſ) *Lib. 6. c. 21.*

The

The famous *Richard*, Archbiſhop of *Armagh*, in his Treatiſe againſt the errours of the *Armenians*, ſpeaking of the word *merces*; does explain himſelf in theſe terms (*t*). *Seeing ſome certain ſort of recompence ought to be given to any one, not upon the account of the condignity of his Work, but upon the account of the promiſe, and ſo alſo of the juſtice of him who gives it, and who promis'd it only in general; let this ſort of recompence be given in any degree whatſoever, one may ſtill call it wages for Work.*

(*t*) *Lib.* 12. *c.* 21.

Bradwardin Chancellour of *Oxford*, and afterwards Archbiſhop of *Canterbury* does attack the *Pelagians* with a vaſt volume, wherein he overthrows the Doctrine of Merit of condignity in ſeveral places, vigorouſly maintaining this Propoſition, *That Merits are not the cauſe of Eternal reward*, (*u*) as the Doctrine of the ſacred Scriptures and of Antiquity.

A. 1350.

(*u*) *merita non eſſe cauſam æterni præmii.*

If any one does ſtill deſire a ſtronger proof than the Teſtimony of theſe three perſons does afford, though becauſe writing in the ſame time, in places far diſtant from one another, and upon a popular ſubject, one might eaſily believe them for what they ſay; I may alledg the Univerſity of *Paris*, where *Guy* a Profeſſour and a *Carmelite*, having propounded this Propoſition againſt a *Jacobin*, *Man does merit eternal life* de condigno, *that is to ſay, in ſuch a manner that unleſs it were given him, he would be injur'd, and God would wrong himſelf*, he was forc't to recant it as falſe, heretical, and blaſphemous. This was done in the year 1353. by the order of the Chancellour of the Univerſity, and of ſeveral other Doctors of the faculty at *Paris*.

After

After this recantation, we may ſee many eminent Divines following the opinion of St. *Anſelme* and St. *Bernard*. One *Jacobus de Hauteville* Profeſſour at *Paris*, whoſe opinion *Marſilius ab Ingen* does take notice of. *Marſilius ab Ingen* does formally maintain that our Works whether conſider'd in themſelves, or as the fruit of the grace of God working with us, cannot merit *ex condigno*, which he proves all along by Scripture: and he does determine on the contrary, that whatſoever is called Merit, does depend upon the acceptance of God through the Merit of Jeſus Chriſt. *Gerardus de Zutphen*, who died four years before *Marſilius*, was plainly of the ſame opinion.

Towards the end of that age, *Raymondus Jordanus* Abbot of *Celles* in *Berry* was of this opinion. They publiſh'd his Books under the name of *Idiota*, but Father *Raynaud* has made it appear that they were this *Raymondus*'s. Thus he ſpeaks: (x) *Tribulation*, ſays he, *does not ſuit well with a paſt crime which thou doſt pardon, nor with the preſent grace of conſolation which thou doſt give, nor with the future glory which thou doſt freely promiſe.* Theſe words did diſpleaſe the Cenſors of the *Bibliotheca Patrum*, who therefore put a *Cautè legendum* at the margin. They were ſo much afraid, leſt they ſhould wholly attribute the praiſe of our Salvation to the mercy of God.

(x) *Lib. 2. Contempl. p. 445. T. 5. B. P.*

The Doctrine of St. *Anſelme*, was not forgotten in the XV*th*. Age, which furniſhes us with a great many eminent witneſſes who did oppoſe the Merit of condignity.

Petrus de Alliaco Biſhop of *Cambray*, and afterwards a Cardinal, does maintain that Merits are but improperly call'd the cauſe of Recompence.

Gerſon

Gerſon Chancellour of the Univerſity of *Paris*, a Perſon admir'd all *Europe* over in the time of the Council of *Conſtance*, does, in his Treatiſe *of the Art of Dying*, put theſe words in the Mouth of a dying Believer, *O Lord, I implore thy pardon, not for any value of my own Merits, but by the virtue and efficacy of thy moſt Holy Paſſion, by the which thou wert willing to redeem me, even me that was miſerable, and didſt vouchſafe to purchaſe Paradiſe for me by the price of thy Blood.* The ſame *Gerſon* when he made his Will, concluded it with this verſe,

Spes mea tu Jeſus es, gratia, non opera.

Johannes Waldenſis, whoſe works were examin'd at *Rome* and approv'd of by Pope *Martin* the V*th*, does at the ſame time expreſs himſelf in as preciſe a manner. When he ſaw a great party of *Thomas Aquinas*'s opinion concerning *Merit of Condignity*, he expreſſes himſelf thus, *I take him for a moſt Holy Divine, for a moſt faithful Catholick and moſt agreeing with the Holy Scriptures, who does ſimply renounce any ſuch Merit, and does avow with the moderation of the Apoſtle and the Scriptures, that no Man does ſimply merit the Kingdom of Heaven, but by the grace of God, or by the will of him who beſtows it.* He proves his opinion by the Sacred Scripture, by the Fathers, by the Canon of the *Maſs* which ſpeaking of the Saints do import thus much, *into whoſe company we pray thee to admit us, not regarding our Merit, but granting us Pardon.* And in another place, he ſays, *To the end that we, who do not truſt in the quality of Merits, may merit not thy judgment but thy mercy.*

I confess that *Waldensis* as learned a Man as he was, does take those words of the *Mass*, *non æstimator Meriti, sed donator Veniæ*, in a wrong sense. It is certain by the expositions of the ages before *Waldensis*, that the word *Meritum* does not in this place signify Good Works, but Sins; the sense is, *not regarding our sins, but granting us pardon for them.* Some of those Divines have notwithstanding follow'd the errour of *Waldensis*; but if it be a fault, the great approbation which they have for the Works of *Waldensis* has authoriz'd it. And it is very probable, that if so learned a Man as *Waldensis* could thus make use of this place of the *Mass*, there were a great many Divines in his time, who understood it in the same sense as he did, more regarding the sound of the terms, than their true signification. However it was, see what he adds, *God*, saith he, *according to this article, has no regard to our Merit, either of congruity or of condignity, but to his own grace, will, and mercy. It is therefore very injurious to our Saviour, and him who crowns us so freely, to dispute so much about Merits, without speaking of his Grace.*

Paul Bishop of *Burgos*, one of the most knowing Prelates of his time in the Holy Scriptures, did so exactly follow the same opinion, that Cardinal *Bellarmine* thought himself oblig'd to joyn him with *Thomas Waldensis*, as one of those that did most strongly oppose *Thomas Aquinas*'s opinions concerning this matter.

Biel, who was the first that taught in the University of *Tubing*, towards the end of the XV*th*. Age, does explain the *Merit of Condignity* in such a manner, as does quite overthrow the same opinions of *Thomas*, referring all to God's acceptance, positively denying

denying the goodneſs of an action to be the ground of God's rewarding it, but only his promiſe, which is the opinion of the Ancients and of Proteſtants.

Pope Adrian the ſixth, Cardinal *Cajetan*, and *Conrard Koelin*, can eaſily inform us, what was taught in their time, that is to ſay, in the firſt thirty years of the ſixteenth Age.

See what *Adrian* had written in 4. *Sententiarum* before he was *Pope* (*y*). *Our Merits*, ſaith he, *are like a ſtaff of reed, whereon if a Man lean, it breaks, and pierceth the hand of him that leaneth thereon.* He, imitating *Iſaiah* herein, does compare the righteouſneſſes of Man, to a piece of menſtruous cloth. *Our Saviour*, writes he, *then ſpeaks rightly, when he ſays*, When we have done all thoſe things that are commanded you, ſay, we are unprofitable ſervants. This Doctor being afterward made Pope in the year 1522. cauſed his Works to be printed at *Rome*, which was done without any contradiction, neither did he ever retract any thing of this Doctrine.

(*y*) *De Sacram. Euchar. poſt initium.*

Cardinal *Cajetan* is famous for his conferences with *Luther*. But as he in his latter days did apply himſelf to ſtudy and comment upon the Holy Scriptures, ſee how he expreſſeth himſelf upon the ſixth chapter, verſe the twenty third of the *Epiſtle* to the *Romans*, following herein the conceptions of St. *Auſtin*: *St. Paul does not ſay that eternal life is the wages of righteouſneſs, but the gift of God, to the end that we may underſtand, that we do not merit eternal life by our Merits, but by the free gift of God.* This is his opinion at laſt. For I know that though this famous *Thomiſt* had before puſht things ſo far, as to maintain, that the Good Works of the righteous do merit eternal life *ex condigno*, yet there was never any divine covenant

made thereupon. As *Bellarmin* does confeſs *ubi ſupra* cap. 16.

Conrard Koelin, commenting upon the *Summ of* St. *Thomas* does reflect upon St. *Thomas*'s opinion, that Good Works receive *quaſi mercedem*, that is, as it were a reward, upon the account of the promiſe of God made to Good Works, and ſays that he expreſt himſelf thus, *becauſe properly ſpeaking, Man does not receive a reward, becauſe there is nothing juſt or due in this retribution*, and he maintains that in this reſpect *it cannot properly be called a reward* z.

(z) *in* 2 *Thom. q.* 114. *art.* 1.

Eraſmus is ſo expreſs in this matter in many places, that he was cenſur'd for it; and was put in the *Index Expurgatorius*.

Didacus Stella a famous Cordelier, and Confeſſor to Cardinal *Granville* has paſt through the *Index Expurgatorius* of *Quinoga*, for having taught upon St. *Luke*, that we do not merit bleſſedneſs *ex condigno*.

Joſſeus Cliſtoveus an eminent Doctor of *Paris* and a Regular of *Chartres* does make all the ſame reflections upon thoſe words of the *Maſs*, *non æſtimator Meriti, ſed donator Veniæ*, againſt the Merit of Good Works, which *Waldenſis* had done before him. Which ſhows that our Reformers have only followed the ſenſe which the moſt eminent Divines of the Church of *Rome* had put upon thoſe words. This is in his *Elucid. Eccleſiaſt.* p. 156. where he ſays that which *Luther* treating upon the ſame Subject could not have ſaid more.

Johannes Ferus an eminent Cordelier, and Preacher at *Mayence* has followed the ſame opinion, as may be ſeen in his pieces printed at *Paris*, with the priviledg and approbation of the *Sorbonne*, in the year 1560. It is true, that following the ſtile of the Inquiſition,

quiſition, they have ſince expunged thoſe places out of his Works. And probably this is the reaſon, why there is another Edition of them Printed at *Rome*.

Claudius Eſpenſæus, the famous Biſhop of *Eureux*, who was preſent as a Doctor at the Council of *Trent*, does defend *Eraſmus*'s opinion in his Comment upon the Second Epiſtle to *Timothy* and fourth Chapter, as conformable to the ſentiments of St. *Auſtin*, declaring with that ancient Doctor, that the *Crown of Righteouſneſs* is ſo called, becauſe it is juſt that God ſhould grant that which he has in his mercy promiſed, although the thing be not due.

There is a Work of Abbot *Louis Blaſius*, who dyed in the Year 1566, Printed in the *Bibliotheca Patrum* under the name of Abbot *Dacrianus*. It is called *Speculum Monachorum*, where he ſpeaks in ſeveral places after ſuch a manner, as ſhows that he was of an opinion directly oppoſite to Merits of Condignity. Thus he ſpeaks of the faithful; *They do not*, ſays he, *confidently place the hope of their Salvation in the number, or in the Merit of the Good Works which they do, but in the liberty of the Children of God which they have obtained by the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt* (*a*).

(*a*) T. 5. D. 16. P. 708.

This is the Hiſtory of what paſſed from the XII*th* Age, till the Council of *Trent*, about the belief of *Merit of Condignity*. To draw any great advantage from it, I judge it is neceſſary to add here ſome Conſiderations, which we may very naturally make upon it.

The

The Firſt Conſideration.

THE firſt Conſideration, which one might make upon it, is, That the Church of *Rome* has not been exempted from changes in the moſt important matters of Religion. That therefore it tells us, with ſuch an Emphaſis, of its immutability, is a meer illuſion. In vain do they maintain, That an Image of Plaiſter Work, which they have formerly gilt over, is of pure Maſſy Gold, ſince it is ſufficient to undeceive the World, that by the breaking off only one Finger of it, it is evident that it is nothing but Plaiſter Work gilt over. There are none but ignorant perſons that can be abuſed by it. And certainly never was any thing more eaſie to be conceived than the change which we ſpeak of. Ever ſince ſo great a Man as *Thomas Aquinas* and ſome others did produce this new opinion, though they could not make it be received altogether, yet they have inſenſibly drawn in *ſome Orders* to adhere to this opinion, and to admire their learning. The *Summ* of St. *Thomas* has inſenſibly been owned by the Popiſh Divines, and they look't upon it as the Sacred Text, ſome Ages ago. At laſt it has in ſome meaſure prevailed over *Lombard*, whoſe Work had ſerved as a Text to an infinite number of Divines from the XII*th* to this preſent Age. An eminent inſtance of what I ſay is to be ſeen in the Order of *Cordeliers*. All the World knows that *Joannes Scotus* was the firſt that thought of the immaculate conception of the

the Bleſſed Virgin. Nevertheleſs, the credit of this great Man, and the pertinacious adheſion of the Divines of his Club, has almoſt ſubverted the *Roman* School upon this Queſtion. The *Jacobins*, who perſiſt in the ancient opinion, have had much ado to defend themſelves againſt the torrent, and the Council of *Trent* durſt not decide a Queſtion clearer than the day, for fear of making a Schiſm among the Divines of her Communion; the opinion of *Joannes Scotus* having been determined as an Article of Faith at the Council of *Baſil*, which ſhows that within the ſpace of an hundred and twenty three Years, which paſt from the Death of *Joannes Scotus* to this Council, the greateſt part of the Divines had embraced this Novelty; and the *Sorbonne* which looks upon this Council as a General one, does make her Doctors ſwear, That they will defend this belief even to the loſs of their Blood. Thus did error, in a little time, make this great progreſs in the boſome of the *Roman* Communion. And yet after all this, they are continually buzzing in our Ears the immutability of that Church in matters of Faith.

The Second Conſideration.

THE ſecond Conſideration, which ſerves to comprehend the means whereby this change was affected, has reſpect to the Inquiſition, which the *Jacobins* of the Cabal of St. *Thomas Aquinas* were poſſeſſed of from the Year *one thouſand two hundred fifty eight.* One may ſee by a writing of the Univerſity of *Paris*, that they lay'd the greateſt ground of the Pope's approbation of *Thomas Aquinas* his Doctrine upon his Canonizing

Canonizing him. But we know after what manner they have proceeded againſt the other Orders themſelves, when they have dared to oppoſe the ſentiments of this new Saint. How ſince the Inquiſition has come within their hands, they have made uſe of it to the beſt advantage againſt ſuch as had the courage to oppoſe the deſigns and definitions of the Popes. They have not forgotten alſo to make uſe of it to ſupport the intereſts of their Order, as far as they were able, in exterminating all ſuch as ſhould dare to contend with them in matter of Religion. They know well enough that before the Tribunal of the Inquiſition was erected, no opinion could gain ground ſo quickly. When perſwaſion only is made uſe of without outward force, it is a difficult thing for any new opinion to make any quick progreſs. There is contradicting, writing, diſputing, this hinders the progreſs of error; but ſince force and violence were mixt with it, Men hold their peace, and keep their opinion to themſelves; there is need of a great deal of courage, and a great deal of conſideration publickly to maintain an opinion againſt him that is furniſht with power to deſtroy you, and who makes his will the only rule and meaſure of his proceedings. This is the character of the Inquiſition, as may be ſeen in the Inquiſitors Directory publiſht at *Rome*, towards the end of the laſt Age. The People and knowing perſons did not think themſelves often obliged to go and contend with the Divines, whom they lookt upon as Novators; as long as they ſaw that the Orthodox opinions do always enjoy the prayers of the Church, as we very clearly ſee that thoſe did, which reſpect the Nature of Good Works, though they ſaw them oppoſed by thoſe new Diſciples of *Thomas Aquinas*.

The

The Third Conſideration.

THE third Conſideration which one might make upon the means whereby this change was affected, has reſpect to Confeſſion, by means of which the Monks did inſenſibly alter that belief which prevailed aforetime. The care which the Monks took to poſſeſs themſelves of the Conſciences of Men, by rendering themſelves Maſters and Judges of their hearts in the Tribunal of Penance; that great power which they had ever ſince the XIIIth Age in directing Mens Conſciences, maugre all the oppoſition of their own ordinary Paſtors, has given them occaſion to inſtil into People the ſame ſentiments concerning Works meriting *de Condigno*. And indeed if one does carefully examine the matter, it will appear, *Firſt*, That it is juſt from that time, that the Monks have ſet ſo ſtrange a value upon their Works, as if by that means they were in a much greater degree of perfection, than other Chriſtians are. *Secondly*, It appears, That it is from that time, that they have erected Fraternities, by giving their Votaries Letters of Aſſociation for all the Merits of their Convents. As the foundation of theſe Fraternities was altogether new, ſo is it in vain to ſearch for any ſuch Letters in Antiquity, as thoſe which we ſee in theſe laſt Ages. *Waldenſis* (*b*) does recite the form of theſe Aſſociations for the Order of *Carmelites*, to which he did belong: *We grant you the perpetual participation of whatſoever the Mercy of our Saviour does vouchſafe to effect by our Brethren.*

(*b*) *Tom. de Sacramentalibus, Tit. 20. cap. 93.*

M. de St. *Amour* does recite in his Journal, p. 541. the form of Aſſociation which they had in the Order of the *Auguſtins* by a Grace of the General of that Order in the year 1653. We may eaſily perceive how the laſt is much larger than the former It would be a very ſilly thing to imagine that there were any ſuch forms of Aſſociation in the time of St. *Hilary*, who ſaid ſo expreſly upon the Parable of the wiſe Virgins, which refuſed to give of their oyl to the fooliſh ones, (c) *That no man can be aſſiſted by the Works and Merits of another.* The receiving of errors repugnant to Antiquity is an effect of the corruption of Divinity in theſe laſt Ages. And the drawing of ſuch pernicious conſequences from them, for to ſubject the people unto them by pretending to aſſociate them with themſelves, is an effect of a Monkiſh Spirit.

(c) *Can.* 21. *in Matth. p.* 591.

The Fourth Conſideration.

A Fourth Conſideration will evidently demonſtrate the novelty of this proud Doctrine of Merit of Condignity. 'Tis true, the Popes have turn'd thoſe words of Jeſus Chriſt to St. *Peter*, *Whatſoever thou ſhalt looſe on Earth, ſhall be loos'd in Heaven*, into all ſenſes. *Gregory* the ſeventh found therein a right of freeing Subjects from the Oath of Allegiance. *Innocent* the Third found therein a right of granting a kind of general Pardon to all ſuch as would go to defend the Holy Land againſt the Infidels, commanding the Angels to receive them at the hour of their deaths, and to carry them into Heaven without

out ever paſſing through Purgatory. But ever ſince the conceit of the Condignity of Works has gained in the World, they have thereupon invented, that the Saints having done a great many Works of Supererogation, they might make a great advantage of them, if they ſhould make a Fond of them, and the *Popes* who know how to manage them well, have found out a very good ſecret, how to render Indulgences more plauſible, by giving them ſo plauſible a foundation. It is certain, if any thing in the World can be ſo, that Indulgences are nothing elſe but a relaxation of thoſe puniſhments, which the Canons did preſcribe to thoſe who ought to undergo a publick Penance. The moſt knowing of the *Roman* School agree to it. It is certain, that in the firſt Ages of the Church, this Indulgence was granted at the prayer of thoſe who were ready to ſuffer Martyrdom: But ſince the conceit of the Merit of Condignity has prevail'd, it is no more as it was; it is now an imputation of the Satisfactions and Merits of ſuch as have ſuffer'd more than they deſerv'd; and who have done more Good Works, than they were oblig'd to do. The *Pope* has gathered together this ſurpluſage of Satisfactions and of Merits, he keeps the key of them, he opens them in the years of *Jubilee*, he opens them at his pleaſure, and gives of them what, how much, and to whom he pleaſes. *Corrio* has obſerv'd in his Hiſtory of the *Milaneſe*, that *Boniface* the eighth ſent an Indulgence to *Milain*, of ſo uncertain an import, that it was granted, (*d*) neither to the contrite, nor to thoſe that were confeſſed. In the year 1300. the twenty firſt day of *January* when the Indulgence was given out at *Rome*, to which place the *Lombards* could not come, becauſe of continual Wars,

(*d*) *nec contritis, nec confeſſis.*

Pope *Boniface* at the Interceſſion of Viſcount *John Galeaſius*, granted it to *Milain* in the ſame form as he had given it to *Rome*, *viz.* That every one under the Dominion of that Viſcount, although he was neither Contrite nor Confeſſed, ſhould be abſolved from any ſin: on Condition that he remain ten days together in that City, and viſit five Churches every day ..... and offer the firſt time two parts of the Money that he might expend in his Journey to *Rome*, two parts of which are to be beſtowed towards the building of a Church, and the third part to the *Pope*. Theſe are the words of *Corrio*. *Theodericus* of *Niem* Biſhop of *Verd*, relateth almoſt the ſame thing of *Urban* the Sixth: this Pope not content with the great Offerings which were made in the Churches of *Rome* by the *Germans*, *Hungarians*, *Poles*, *Bohemians*, *Engliſh*, and by thoſe that were of the Kingdoms and Provinces under his Obedience he ſent out his Queſtors into ſeveral Kingdoms to ſell his Indulgence for that Money which it might coſt the People in their Journey to *Rome*; and thus he amaſſed together a large heap of wealth, becauſe they abſolved from all ſins confeſſed, even without Penance. This is a marvelous effect, but ſo marvelous that any one may be aſſured, that whoſoever they were that have ever been the greateſt perſons, and moſt knowing in Antiquity, not to ſpeak at preſent of the Apoſtles, did never diſcover any thing of it by all the effort of their meditation and ſtudy. This truth was acknowledged by *Antonius*, *Sylveſter*, *Prieras*, and by *Fiſher* Biſhop of *Rocheſter* in the laſt Age.

The Fifth Conſideration.

THE Fifth Conſideration does reſpect not only that diviſion which is among the Schoolmen about this matter, (which is no very rare thing, no more than their oppoſition to the ſentiments of the pureſt antiquity is,) but that contradiction alſo wherein one may ſee the Writers of the Church of *Rome*, are with themſelves about it. Can any one imagine a more ridiculous contradiction than that of St. *Thomas Aquinas* and of his followers? They confeſs, That Man has nothing in himſelf whereby he can merit, That there is need of an effectual Grace for the converſion of any Man, That this Grace is given freely. It follows from hence, and 'tis the Doctrine of St. *Auſtin*, That Man being indebted to God for this Grace which does puſh him forward to good Works, and which does move him to every good action, he can never merit thereby. In the mean time, notwithſtanding this principle which they lay down, they ceaſe not to maintain, That the faithful do merit, properly ſpeaking. Behold alſo another as palpable a contradiction about the ſame matter. They maintain that Man can make no pretence to the glory of Heaven without the promiſe which God has given him of it; They are forc'd to confeſs moreover upon this foundation, That there is no proportion between Good Works and the Glory of Heaven. From theſe two principles it neceſſarily follows, That if God does give the glory of Heaven to the faithful, 'tis purely of grace, and becauſe he has promiſed it. Nevertheleſs after their agreement in theſe two principles, they ceaſe not to oppoſe the conſequences of them, by

by maintaining that Good Works have properly the nature of true Merits. This is what the Council of *Trent* has determined in authorizing that ridiculous contradiction which the *Thomiſts* are guilty of.

The Sixth Conſideration.

WHatſoever corruption the *Thomiſts* have introduced in Divinity, by their belief concerning the Merit of Good Works, it is eaſy to underſtand, that they have not been ſo far able to ſubvert the reigning conceptions of the *Latine* Church, but that there is ſtill remaining within the boſom of it a great many perſons which do retain the pureſt opinions. 'Tis a truth which is eaſily known, becauſe a great many famous Doctors and moſt eminent perſons in that Communion do always vigorouſly oppoſe this novelty, and do maintain the antient Doctrine. I am even perſwaded that it is almoſt impoſſible, but that the greateſt part of the people muſt continue in the Ancient opinions, if they have had but the leaſt knowledge of the Goſpel: eſpecially when they come to attend to the prayers which were in publick uſe, and to that confeſſion which they cauſed to be made to dying perſons. In effect whatſoever great thoughts one might grant them of thoſe new Saints whoſe works have contributed moſt to the treaſure of Indulgences, there is need of but a very little common ſenſe to underſtand that the greateſt Saints dying with thoſe proteſtations which they cauſed them to make at the very point of death, (then eſpecially obliged to ſpeak ſincerely

ſincerely in ſo principal and ſo important a circumſtance of time,) were either perfect hypocrites; or in fine, that they merited by this lying confeſſion; which are ſo many palpable and groſs abſurdities, that it is not at all neceſſary to confute them. We muſt confeſs then that theſe Diſputes of the *Thomiſts* have been retained for ſome time in the Chairs of the Colleges, and agitated by the Divines only, and that the people had then no part in them. Secondly that ſince they are gone out from the Univerſities, and have entred into the Chairs and Seats of the Confeſſors, they have there been contradicted by divers excellent perſons; which ſerves to defend the ancient Doctrine, and to ſhow plainly the novelty of the other. Thirdly, that when they had very near prevail'd in the *Latine* Church, it has always preſerved in its publick ſervice, ſentiments oppoſite to that which might paſs for the common ſentiment of the Divines of its School. It is here, that we may ſafely apply the remark of St. *Ambroſe*, That oftentimes the ears of the people are more chaſte than the lips of the Paſtors; and that which he ſays at another time, That the people may retain the Orthodoxy, even then when they are led by Paſtors which are engaged in Errour.

The Seventh Conſideration.

WE know that the Council of *Trent* has condemned the Merit of Congruity, that is to ſay, the opinion of a great many Schoolmen, who maintain that Works done before Grace, do merit Grace, if not abſolutely,

ſolutely, yet at leaſt by a kind of agreeableneſs, to which God cannot refuſe it. But to ſay the truth, one may very well wonder, why Merit of Congruity has been more unfortunate than that of Condignity; at leaſt if we look upon them as coming from the Schoolmen. There have been as many at leaſt, who have defended the Merit of Congruity, as that of Condignity. Almoſt all the School of *Scotus* defended Merits of Congruity, that School of *Scotus* which was ſo conſidered at the Council of *Trent*, that if the Immaculate Conception which the *Scotiſts* defended was not eſtabliſhed there into an Article of Faith, for fear of ſeeming to give a deference to the Authority of the Council of *Baſil*, which the Court of *Rome* lookt upon as a Cabal or unlawful Aſſembly, at leaſt they left it in its poſſeſſion by a particular Article; and there was ſome appearance as if Merits of Congruity might have the ſame approbation. What then could have drawn this condemnation upon them? It is no hard matter to gueſs what it was. On the one ſide, they had a mind to preſerve the power of conferring grace to the Sacrament of Penance, and to other Sacraments; and they know that this is a priviledge that does return wholly to them that miniſter the Sacraments, on whom grace does by this means depend. On the other ſide, they found no advantage in this opinion, not to ſay that it did viſibly oppoſe the Doctrine of St. *Auſtin*, and of the Councils and the Popes that had approved of it. But it was otherwiſe with the Doctrine of Merit of Condignity. *Firſt*, They could not renounce it without juſtifying the Reformation which *Luther* had commenced, by overthrowing the foundation of Indulgences, which is the Merit of

of Condignity. *Secondly*, The Popes and the Monks would visibly lose their Credit The Pope would lose his entire Revenue of Indulgences. The Monks would lose all the fruit of their Severities. For to speak what I think, the confidence which they repose in the Merits of the Ancient Saints is small enough; and I am perswaded that for one Visionary who shall put any confidence in the Merits of the Fathers of the Desart of *Thebais*, who lived in the V*th* Age, one may find a hundred thousand which think of nothing but the Merits of the Fathers of the neighbouring Convent, which may sufficiently be seen by the Fraternities and by the Letters, of which there are a great many forms among the Religious. This was it which forced the Fathers of the Council to anathematize three sorts of persons, *viz.* Those that deny, that Good Works do truly merit the augmentation of Grace; those that deny, that they do truly merit eternal Glory; and those that deny, that they do merit the possession of eternal Life. For the second Article does clearly express the Merit of Condignity, which the *Lutherans* deny as strongly as they do the last Article, which does in truth depend on it, but of which the Council makes a branch by it self, because it would consider the dignity of the Work and the Works themselves, before that it would consider that which they obtain of God (*e*).

(*e*) *Can* 32. *Sess.* 6.

The Eighth Conſideration.

BUT, in fine, whatſoever determination was made at the Council of *Trent* upon this matter, I deſire the Reader to conſider that there always has been a great many Chriſtians within the Communion of the Church of *Rome*, who have only apparently followed the Decrees of that Council; and who after all have followed the Doctrines of the Goſpel and of Antiquity. I ſay moreover, that they have ſtrongly oppoſed them, and that it was out of pure neceſſity that they revoked them at the hour of Death. So true is it that Conſcience cannot always be ſeduced by the errors of the underſtanding; 'tis true alſo, that when Men are approaching before the Throne of God's Juſtice, it is difficult for them to preſerve that Spirit of Pride which is in the *Roman* School. One can hardly produce a more lively proof of the truth of this Reflection than the inſtance of Cardinal *Hoſius*, who preſided at the Council of *Trent* under *Pius* the IV*th*. Theſe are ſome of the expreſſions of his laſt Will: *I approach the Throne of thy Grace O Father of Mercies and of all conſolation, to the end that I may obtain mercy and find grace in thy ſight. Whenſoever it ſhall pleaſe thee to demand back again that which thou haſt committed to me, into thy hands I reſign my Spirit; which if thou ſhouldeſt look upon as it is in it ſelf, I confeſs it is not worthy to appear in the preſence of thy Majeſty, for it is full of all kind of pollutions; but if thou haſt reſpect to the Blood of thy Son, wherein it has been waſhed and purify'd, and to thoſe bitter Torments which he ſuffered for our ſins*

that

that he might render us acceptable in thy ſight, they are worthy that for their ſake thou ſhouldſt give it eternal Life, which he purchaſed at ſo great a price. He deſires that God would not look upon him in himſelf, but in the face of Jeſus Chriſt. *I am not worthy,* ſays he, *that thou ſhouldſt behold me with the Eyes of thy Majeſty, but as it is moſt worthy that for the ſake of his Death and Paſſion, thou ſhouldſt not only look upon me; but crown me alſo. 'Tis therefore that I come unto thee, moſt dear Father, and that without any Merits, but thoſe ineſtimable ones of thy Son Jeſus Chriſt my Lord and my Redeemer. I bring thee the Merit of that Death, wherein alone I place all my hope and my confidence; that is my righteouſneſs, my ſatisfaction, my redemption and my propitiation. The Death of my Lord is my Merit.* And after that having recited the words of St. *Bernard* in his ſixty firſt Sermon upon the *Canticles*, which I have cited before, he adds, ſpeaking of the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt, *Regard that price; for that price ſake declare me worthy to be placed among the Sheep at thy right Hand.* See here what the Conſcience ſays, when it beholds its Sins and its Good Works; and it will never ſpeak otherwiſe, eſpecially at the hour of Death, where it ſcatters away its illuſions; except the Church of *Rome* does blot out of her Books the Queſtions which are made to dying perſons, becauſe they contain a clear and expreſs abjuration of the Doctrine of Merits of Condignity. And though the Indexes made by the orders of the Council of *Trent* have attempted to raſe them out, yet they have hitherto never been able to do it in the *Roman* Communion. And if the Prieſts who ought to make uſe of them about dying perſons, do ſuppreſs them, to accommodate themſelves

themselves to the designs of the Council, and of the *Index Expurgatorius*, such at least as do not acknowledge the Tribunal of the Inquisition, do retain this truth, as that which does afford all the consolation to dying persons that they can have.

FINIS.

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